



SEPG North America 2012 Abstract Review Guidelines

These abstract review guidelines are intended to communicate helpful details regarding abstract review for SEPG North America 2012. In this document, you will find an overview of the abstract review process, voting criteria, abstract rating scale, and a suggested approach to reviewing abstracts based on past reviewers' feedback.

The goal of the review process is to improve the consistency of ratings among reviewers and support the development of a technical program that

- is of high quality
- is relevant, timely, and excites conference attendees
- reflects innovation and diversity in software process improvement research, practice, and education
- reflects a balance between research, practice, issues and concerns, and education
- reflects a balance between the varied areas that contribute to and support the software process improvement community

Abstract reviewers will review submitted abstracts by topic area. Reviewers will be asked to rate abstracts in the Active Network System using defined voting criteria. The abstract review process is as follows:

- Each submitted abstract is matched anonymously to three reviewers at a minimum, based on the self-declared knowledge of the reviewer.
- Abstracts are reviewed in the Active Network System using the voting criteria described.
- Abstract reviews are provided to the technical track chair(s), including the recommended scoring and comments.
- Abstracts are reviewed by the SEPG North America 2012 Program Selection Committee, which is made up of the technical track chair(s) and technical program co-chairs. A status of accepted for presentation, accepted as back-up presentation, or not accepted for presentation is assigned based on overall ranking of the sum of ratings and reviewer comments.
- Accepted presentations are assigned a timeslot in the program and the presenter(s) are notified.
- Back-up presentations are selected and presenters are notified.
- Abstract submitters for presentations that are not accepted for presentation are notified.
- Presenters and back-up presenters must register for SEPG North America no later than December 31, 2011 or their presentation may be removed from the program.

Voting Criteria

Reviewers are asked to use the following criteria to support the assignment of abstract ratings in the Active Network System. There are a series of abstract review questions in which the reviewer is asked to assign a rating using a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest. To support the assignment of ratings, additional guidance questions designed to clarify the intent of the question are provided.

When you log in the Abstract Review and Voting System you will see the following information for each abstract that is assigned to you.

Title

Session ID

Session Type

Technical Level

Abstract for consideration (clicking this link allows you to review the abstract)

Conference Track

Learner outcome 1

Learner outcome 2

Learner outcome 3

There are three questions that follow the background information that can be answered with “yes” or “no” as fits the abstract in question.

SEPG Track: The track(s) selected by the author are appropriate

- If you do not feel the abstract is appropriate for the track selected by the author, you may suggest another track for that abstract in the “comments to program committee” field.

Relevance: The submission is relevant and appropriate for SEPG North America 2012

- Is the topic, question, or issue relevant to the SEPG community?

Length of Content: The content is appropriate for the session length

The next section in the voting system consists of fields where you will provide your ratings from 1-5 on whether or not the abstract fits the stated criteria, and how well it does so. The rating numbers that are entered will be weighted and compiled to provide a final ratings number for each abstract.

For the following items, please provide a rating from 1 to 5.

5 = I strongly agree with this statement.

4 = I agree with this statement.

3 = I neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

2 = I disagree with this statement.

1 = I strongly disagree with this statement.

Practical Impact: The information presented in this abstract has or may have a practical impact for attendees.

- Is the significance of the work clearly stated?
- Is the abstract topic timely in terms of current issues or interest?
- Is the presentation likely to be of interest to a reasonable number of SEPG North America 2012 attendees?

Originality: The abstract submission shows a high degree of originality.

- Is the work original or does it present new data?

Correctness: The abstract content is technically correct.

- Are the conclusions justified?

Technical Depth: The abstract suggests that the submission has the technical depth to be of interest to the audience.

- Is the technical depth relevant for the technical level for which the abstract was submitted?

Presentation: The abstract is clearly stated and easy to understand.

- Is the abstract topic clearly stated and understood?
- Is the abstract written clearly and organized well?

Overall: The overall quality of the abstract is high.

Comments for the Author: Are there any comments (positive or negative) that you wish to communicate to the author? Low ratings should be supported by comments for the author’s benefit, but please be constructive.

Comments for the Program Selection Committee: Please provide any other information that you feel the Program Selection Committee should be aware of that may assist them in making a decision on this abstract. The comments in this box will not be seen by the authors of the abstract submission.

Vote: Please cast your final vote on this abstract here, using the following abstract rating scale.

Abstract Rating Scale

5 = Accept (I vote to accept this paper.)

4 = Weak Accept (I can support a vote to accept, but I won't argue for it.)

3 = Neutral (I'm not impressed but I don't feel strongly for or against it.)

2 = Weak Reject (I don't like it, but I won't vote to completely reject it.)

1 = Total Reject (I vote to reject this paper.)

Suggested Review Process

There is no right or wrong approach to reviewing and rating abstracts. However, the following suggestions have been put forth by frequent reviewers as steps that have made the review process efficient, fair, and balanced.

Step 1: Prior to responding to the voting criteria and assigning ratings in the Active Network System.

1. Review the voting criteria outlined in this document.
2. Have a copy of the list of topics open or printed out so that you can refer to it when needed. This list of topics will be included in the message when you receive your review assignment.
3. Print out a copy of each abstract or cut and paste abstracts into a Microsoft Word document.
 - a. Read each abstract to obtain a general understanding for the overall range of abstracts and make initial notes and comments.
 - i. Based on past experience, several abstract reviewers have commented that it is best to review all the abstracts in one sitting.
4. Re-read the abstracts and make more detailed notes and comments.
 - a. Based on past experience, several abstract reviewers have stated they found it useful to separate the second reading by two days. Some individuals report that they have a strong positive or negative reaction on the initial reading of an abstract which often changes when they have time to reflect on whether their initial response was valid.
5. Rank order the abstract by Reject (1), Weak Reject (2), Neutral (3), Weak Accept (4), and Accept (5) or create a grading rubric.
 - a. Some reviewers review the highly- and poorly-rated abstracts a second time prior to recording their ranking to ensure fairness.
 - b. Some reviewers check their consistency in a variety of ways—some rate the abstracts at two sittings independently, then compare ratings. Others rank order after applying ratings, then compare ratings to see if they are consistent with the ranking.

Step 2: In the Active Network System, respond to voting criteria and assign ratings.

1. Using the results of Step 1, provide response to the voting criteria and assign ratings.
2. If an abstract is rated as Neutral (3), Weak Reject (2), or Reject (1) provide feedback to the abstract author(s) on why the abstract was given a neutral or low rating. This is not a mandatory step, but it can be useful for authors whose abstract was not accepted in understanding what they might do differently next time.
3. Any feedback, positive or negative, provided to the abstract author(s) is valuable and will be used by the Program Selection Committee to develop a strong technical program.
 - a. Positive feedback is very motivating and can help authors whose abstract has been accepted in building their presentation for the conference.
 - b. Negative feedback, stated in a helpful and constructive manner, can be just as useful to authors whose abstract may not have been chosen for this year's program.